DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 342 918 CE 060 450

TITLE	Report of the Task Force on Adult Student Life and Learning.
INSTITUTION	Pennsylvania State Univ., University Park.
PUB DATE	Oct 90
NOTE	65p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Persistence; Access to Education; Adult Counseling; Adult Learning; *Adult Students; College Administration; *College Students; Educational Finance; Higher Education; School Holding Power; Student Characteristics; *Student Needs; *Student Personnel Services; Student Recruitment
IDENTIFIERS	*Pennsylvania State University

ABSTRACT

A task force reviewed recommendations made in previous studies and assessed strategies for issues facing adult students at Pennsylvania State University. It addressed administrative and financial systems, special needs, services needed, and enhanced student life of adult students. At Penn State in the fall semester 1989, students 24 years of age or older represented 17 percent of the total undergraduate enrollment. More individualized attention seems to be needed for adult learners who come to college more goal oriented and demanding of services, yet with more time constraints. Adult learners juggle job, family, community, and classroom obligations. Competition for the adult learner has increased. Institutions most successful at recruiting provide the fewest barriers. Adult learners are not easily categorized, so programs and services should be flexible and accommodate their needs. All aspects of university life--instruction, services, and administration--need to support adult learners' educational experiences. Many units of Penn State provide programs and services for the adult learner. Critical areas need to be addressed: an ongoing system; faculty sensitization, instruction, and academic policy; enhancement of campus/student life; advising, counseling, and informational support; and administrative (student aid, admissions, and registration) and financial systems. (Appendices contain 18 references, an adult services checklist and responses, and implementation comments.) (NLA)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED342918

CE

REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE ON ADULT STUDENT LIFE AND LEARNING

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

OCTOBER 1990

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

S. Jordan

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CE060450

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Student Marshal: Bonnie J. Horton of Clearfield, a returning adult student, will serve as student marshal for the College of Health and Human Development commencement May 12.

Horton, majoring in human development and family studies, has compiled a near-perfect grade point average of 3.99 as an undergraduate student.

She received the President's Freshman Award and participated in the University Scholars Program. Horton graduated from Clearfield Area High School in 1970, then worked in nursing and in family planning for a number of years before enrolling at Penn State. She attended the DuBois Campus as a part-time student during her freshman and sophomore years before completing her studies at University Park.

From the Centre Daily Times
Spring 1990

Student Marshal: Richard Bradbury of Reading has been named student marshal for the College of Arts and Architecture for commencement ceremonies on May 12.

The student marshal is the graduating senior with the highest grade point average in the college. A University Scholar, Bradbury will receive a bachelor of fine arts degree in performance from the Department of Theatre Arts. Bradbury started his undergraduate studies at the Penn State Berks Campus when he was 25.

At Penn State, Bradbury appeared in the University Resident Theatre Company productions of "Red Noses," "The Normal Heart," "The Mad Woman of Chaillot" and "The Crucible." He finished his Penn State performing career in April playing Jean-Paul Marat in the URTC production of "Marat/Sade."

From the Centre Daily Times
Spring 1990

Table of Contents

Preface iii

Numbers 1

Charge to the Task Force on Adult Student Life and Learning 3

Work of the Task Force 6

Definitions 11

The Adult Learner at Penn State 13

Recommendations 20

- Establishing an On-Going System 20
- Faculty Sensitization, Instruction, and Academic Policy 23
- Enhancing Campus/Student Life 25
- Advising, Counseling, and Informational Support 27
- Administrative and Financial Systems 29
  - Student Aid 29
  - Admissions 31
  - Registration 31
  - Financial Systems 33
  - Table 1: Distribution of Undergraduate Enrollment by Age and Status 34

Acknowledgements 35

Appendix A: References 36

Appendix B: Student Services Checklist 38

- Summary of Adult Services Check List Responses 44

Appendix C: Selected Comments on Implementation 50

- Faculty Sensitization, Instruction, an Academic Policy 50
  - Faculty Development 50
  - Faculty 51
  - Credit Acquisition 53
  - Senate Policy 55
  - Admission Criteria for Adult Learners 55
- Enhancing Campus/Student Life 57
  - Child Care 57
  - Housing at University Park 58
- Administrative and Financial Systems 58
- Advising, Counseling, and Informational Support 59

Preface

Adult students are everywhere at Penn State. They are at every campus location and taking courses via every delivery mode which the University provides. They are full-time and part-time. They are here in the day, in the evening, and at a distance; and they are never the same semester by semester. One semester a student may be part-time taking courses via Continuing Education. Another semester a student may be in Resident Education full-time and another semester taking courses only via Independent Learning. Some adult students are location-bound, perhaps earning an extended degree from Penn State or transferring to another institution for a degree. Some students move within the system--from a campus within the Commonwealth Educational System to University Park, Penn State Harrisburg, or Penn State Erie. Adult students may be associate degree candidates, baccalaureate degree candidates, provisionals, nondegrees, graduate students, or enrolled in noncredit courses. Adult students may be our children, our spouses, our neighbors, friends, and ourselves; they may even be student marshals at graduation exercises.

Numbers

At Penn State in the Fall Semester 1989 students 24 years of age or older represented 17 percent of the total undergraduate enrollment. Of these 10,070 students 52 percent were female and 48 percent were male. Two-thirds of these students were classified as part time; one-third were identified as full-time. However, at University Park 60 percent of the undergraduate adult student population of 2,495 were enrolled full-time.

Forty-four percent of adult learners were registered as nondegree, 37 percent as baccalaureate degree candidates, 11 percent as associate degree candidates, and 8 percent as provisionals.

In the Commonwealth Educational System there has been a 43 percent increase in adult learners during the last five years; the past year saw a rise of 12 percent.

Penn State data reflect national trends. It is estimated (Table 1, page 34) that by 1992, 49 percent of undergraduate students will be 25 years of age or older and 48 percent of all students will be part-time. A lower birth rate in the 1960s and 1970s has led to a smaller pool of traditional-age applicants for higher education; and as "baby boomers" return to the classroom and the average age of the American population continues to rise, the look of the college classroom changes. Between 1980 and 1985 students in higher education over age 25 increased by 12 percent while the under 25 age cohort decreased by 5 percent. This enrollment trend consists of a segment of the population which typically did not attend higher education in great numbers: divorced women, older persons, members of minority groups, and veterans.

The increasing numbers of adults at Penn State should not be the only reason to respond to these students' needs. Citizens throughout Pennsylvania need to be prepared for new occupations in the labor market and need to be

retrained as old jobs become obsolete. As these students look to Penn State for their education, the University's response should be consistent with its mission to provide life-long learning experiences. Historically, however, the mainstream educational bureaucracy has served a rather homogeneous sample of young adults. As this "demographic revolution" continues, "things as usual" should not be the modus operandi for Penn State. Penn State's programs, services, curricula, regulations, and policies must be in synchrony with these new University students.

Charge to the Task Force on Adult Student Life and Learning

In establishing the task force, Executive Vice President and Provost William Richardson and Faculty Senate Chairperson Janet Atwood wrote the following: "Returning adult students represent a significant segment of the student population across the Penn State system. The special contributions, characteristics, and needs of this group have been recognized in two University studies: Characteristics and Attitudes of Adult Students in the Commonwealth Educational System (1986-1987) and A Survey of Adult Student Services, Commonwealth Educational System (1987), issued by the Commonwealth Educational System Division of Planning Studies.

At the January 24, 1989 meeting of the University Faculty Senate, the Committee on Student Life presented an advisory and consultative report, Adult Students, which recommended that a task force be formed to consider the unique problems and issues facing adult students at Penn State and to assess the progress made in addressing the concerns and suggestions in the two earlier studies.

The charge to the task force is described below...."

1. Review the recommendations made in previous studies and assess (a) the feasibility of each recommendation, (b) what would be required for implementation, and (c) the implementation steps that have already been taken.
2. Develop recommendations for a program to help sensitize faculty to the challenges and opportunities of working with adult students in both the instructional and research environments.

3. Recommend steps to ensure that administrative and financial systems are sensitive to the characteristics of adult students.

4. Develop criteria for a plan of advising which addresses the special needs of adult students.

5. Make recommendations for an ongoing system to provide the services needed by adult students.

6. Recommend ways to enhance the campus/student life of adult students.

Members of the Task Force on Adult Student Life and Learning

Brian Clark, Coordinator, Veterans Programs
Barbara A. Copland, Special Assistant to the Vice President for Student Services
Frederick W. Ehrhart, Director of Continuing Education, Penn State Harrisburg
Robert W. Evans, Director, Student Aid
Warren Haffner, University Registrar
Charlene H. Harrison, Acting Director, Returning Adult Student Center
Evelyn A. Hovanec, Director of Academic Affairs, McKeesport Campus
Daniel Maier-Katkin, Professor of Law and American Studies and Head, Department of Administration of Justice
John C. Marshall, Director of Field Services, Continuing Education
James. T. McKeel, Director, Division of Admissions Services and Management, Office of Undergraduate Admissions
James H. Mortenson, Associate Dean for Resident Instruction, College of Agriculture
Judith L. Newman, Associate Professor of Human Development, Ogontz Campus
Larry R. Pollock, Director of Student Programs and Services, New Kensington Campus
Carolyn Prager, Campus Executive Officer, Shenango Campus
June P. Roarabaugh, Undergraduate Student, Health Education
Jovita M. Ross-Gordon, Assistant Professor of Education
John R. Saunders, Graduate Student, Higher Education
Gaye W. Sheffler, Director of Student Affairs, Hershey Medical Center
Brian B. Tormey, Assistant Professor of Environmental Sciences, Altoona Campus
Kenneth E. Varcoe, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs
Eric R. White, Director, Division of Undergraduate Studies, (CHAIR)

Staff
Carol L. Everett, Senior Planning Analyst
Rita C. Williams, Secretary

Work of the Task Force

The Task Force on Adult Student Life and Learning met at regular intervals during Spring Semester 1990 and Summer Session 1990 beginning with the charge to the task force delivered on February 14, 1990 by Provost Richardson and Faculty Senate Chairperson Atwood. Five committees were formed to address the charge: Faculty Sensitization, Instruction and Academic Policy; Enhancing Campus/Student Life; Advising, Counseling and Informational Support; Administrative and Financial Systems; and Establishing an Ongoing System.

Several members of the task force first surveyed recommendations made in previous Penn State studies related to Adult Student Life and Learning. The studies are listed in Appendix A. The recommendations were analyzed for content and assigned to one of the five committees.

Each committee was responsible for reviewing the assigned recommendations with regard to feasibility of implementation and progress toward implementation. Task Force members also determined that additional studies would not be conducted as part of their work since previous studies provided a substantial data base of survey responses and recommendations. One committee, however, did survey all campuses of the Commonwealth Educational System, Penn State Harrisburg and Penn State Erie to determine the present status of programs and services designed for adult learners (see Appendix B). Response to this check list enabled the task force to ascertain progress made in providing adult learners with programs and services since the publication of two University studies: Characteristics and Attitudes of Adult Students in the Commonwealth Educational System (1986-1987) and A Survey of Adult Student Services, Commonwealth Educational System (1987). A second committee

conducted telephone interviews with Campus Executive Officers or appropriate designees to determine current provisions for faculty development related to the characteristics and needs of adult learners.

Five members of the University community provided the task force with observations, opinions, and recommendations concerning the status of adult learners at Penn State. These individuals, Lorene Ashby, Peg O'Hara, Gale Siegel, Diane Leos, and James Ryan have lengthy experience with adult learners and a reputation for serving them well. Each individual eloquently urged that Penn State pay more attention to this portion of the student body. Lorene Ashby, Assistant Director of Undergraduate Admissions, for example, stressed the need to provide more personal contacts for adults as they contemplate returning to higher education. Our written materials are not always sufficient to provide answers to the myriad of intricate issues which adult learners face as they return to their studies. Adult learners often present complex patterns of prior academic experiences and this is often the reason they need more attention and express a desire to work with one person throughout much of their admission process.

Peg O'Hara, Director of Student Affairs at Penn State Harrisburg, spoke of the range of services necessary when adults become a critical mass on campus and how a campus needs to adapt to a different clientele. Adult learners pose unique housing situations and require the services of counselors knowledgeable about issues relevant to adults. A counselor for adult learners may need skills in marital and family counseling, issues of mid-life crises, therapeutic interventions for the adult children of alcoholics, and in assisting adults with the many transitions they face during their time in higher education. In short, more individualized attention seems needed for

adult learners who consistently come to college campuses more goal-oriented, more demanding of services, yet with more constraints on their time. Unlike the traditional student, adult learners are often juggling job responsibilities, family duties (both children and parents), community activities, and classroom obligations. The notion of four years in an environment free from outside distraction to pursue the goals of higher education is not a viable one; the attendance of adult learners is often part-time, interrupted and determined by the starting and ending dates of school systems. Children's health and employment demands often put adult learners in conflict with the routines of higher education. How the potential conflicts are resolved will often determine an adult learner's retention at a particular institution of higher education.

Speaking from a Commonwealth Educational System perspective, Gale Siegel, Adult Educational Vocational Counselor at Penn State Ogontz, encouraged a rededication to serving adult learners at Penn State. As prognosticators warned of a declining pool of traditional-age students, competition for the adult learner has increased in the last ten years. Institutions most successful in recruiting adult learners are those which provide the fewest barriers at the point of entry and during matriculation. For example, when the application process is simplified, the transfer of credits is handled speedily, formal articulations with other institutions are available, extended baccalaureate degree programs are available, billing procedures do not pose financial restraints, and credit for "life experiences" are considered, then a climate of acceptance has been created. Likewise, when advertising and marketing campaigns specifically mention the adult learner, designated adult counselors are readily accessible, the academic calendar is flexible, and

financial aid offered, then adult learners recognize the commitment of a particular institution to meet their educational needs.

Diane Leos, Student Services Specialist in Independent Learning who works much of the time with adults, emphasized the need to help the adult learner who is often bewildered by the seemingly vast array of rules and regulations associated with entering Penn State. Distance learners, in particular, frequently far from a campus location, depend upon information from a reliable source. Adult learners returning to college are often fearful of the classroom experience, either because their first time around was unsuccessful or the college classroom represents an unknown. Consequently, Independent Learning represents a safer mode of instruction for some returning adult learners. Counselors who help alleviate fears, answer very specific questions, and facilitate entry into the learning environment provide the necessary support for the adult learner.

James Ryan, newly-appointed Vice President for Continuing Education, noted the demographic shifts occurring in the Commonwealth and how these shifts affect the nature of Penn State's course offerings and services. Adult learners may often be location bound. They are also looking for specific program offerings at convenient times, with reasonable cost and quality instruction. The needs of adult learners call for advocacy from all segments of the University, but especially from Continuing Education as the adult learner embraces higher education as part of a life-long learning experience. While much attention in regard to adult learners is related to the acquisition of credits as part of a degree program, nonetheless noncredit experiences also represent viable alternatives. Noncredit experiences may represent either ends in themselves or preludes to credit courses and a degree.

Suggestions from these five individuals were taken into account by each committee. Recommendations emanating from each committee were reviewed by the entire task force and further altered. Before a final draft was submitted to the task force, three task force members reviewed the recommendations from all the committees and thematically categorized them. Final recommendations are provided within committee categories.

Definitions

Finding or devising an acceptable definition of the adult student is an elusive task. Polson et al. (1986) offers the following definition:

> [The adult learner] is a high school graduate or holder of a GED and who has been away from formal education for at least two years. The person may hold either a full-time or part-time job, have established his/her own home, and assumed roles other than that of student. [The adult learner] is often a part-time learner since education is often not his/her primary concern.

The Pew Higher Education Research Program in Policy Perspectives (January 1990, Vol. 2, Number 2) labels the adult student as higher education's new majority and defines this "new majority" as: (1) all currently enrolled undergraduates aged 25 or older; (2) all currently enrolled undergraduates under 25 years old who did not proceed directly from high school to college, who attend part time, or who have "stopped out" for more than one year.

The Returning Adult Student Center Advisory Board at Penn State has developed this definition of the adult learner:

1. A veteran of the armed services or,
2. One who is out of school for four or more years or,
3. A person 24 years of age and above.

Acknowledging the presence of adult learners on our campuses is facilitated by having an easily quantifiable definition. While age and time away from formal education seem to be convenient factors to include in any definition of the adult learner, other characteristics actually provide the essence for a more substantive definition. For example, adult learners are

characterized by multiple roles associated with adulthood (e.g., self-supporting through full-time or part-time employment, parenthood, marriage, significant involvement in community or avocational activities). More importantly, those characteristics of the adult learner which differentiate them from the traditional-age student (e.g., a wider range of individual differences and experiences, more competing demands) should influence the planning and delivery of programs and services which meet the needs of these students. Clearly, adult learners use virtually all of the programs and services provided for the traditional-age student. Adult learners, though, are not easily categorized and thus programs and services need to be as flexible and as accommodating as possible to meet their complex needs.

The Adult Learner at Penn State

> The traditional idea of the college student... is ... changing in response to the needs of our contemporary world. There is, for example, a fundamental transformation taking place in undergraduate education where record numbers of so-called non-traditional students are enrolling. Nationwide it is projected that at least 60 percent of all enrollments by the end of the decade will be "older students" or students who have "stopped out" for a period of time once they have begun college. Many of these individuals are location bound as they attempt to interweave education and work. And, by the way, they require much more than simply convenient times and locations. Their experience challenges traditional notions of curriculum and their maturity frequently challenges customary methods of instruction.
>
> President Bryce Jordan
> April 17, 1990
> University Faculty Senate Meeting

How is Penn State to respond to the adult learner? Task force members believe that statements from the central administration which embrace and not merely tolerate adult learners are necessary. President Jordan's remarks at the Faculty Senate acknowledge not only the existence of adult learners, but the importance of responding creatively to their needs. Serving adult learners is certainly not a new concept at Penn State. The land-grant mission of this institution, as manifested especially in Extension and Continuing Education, has resulted in many fine programs and services for this population. Yet working with and for the adult learner can no longer be the province of a few units of the University. Rather all aspects of university life--instruction, services, administration--need to support adult learners' educational experiences.

The demographic revolution that is occurring will bring about continued educational change. Adult learners are a heterogeneous lot, different not only from the traditional student, but also from each other. Representing a wider age range than the traditional student, their diversity is even more

apparent as they are examined across the age continuum. While University programs and services for the traditional student are complex and specialized (and are, indeed, useful to the adult learner), they are still not comprehensive enough to accommodate the needs of adults.

Schlossberg, Lynch, and Chickering (1989) suggest a model for programs and services which encompasses the "moving in," "moving through," and "moving on" stages of an adult learner's experiences in higher education. Recruitment, for example, must be done with all the sophistication and vigor devoted to attracting the traditional-age student to Penn State. The entry process though must exhibit more than administrative fine tuning. Rather the goal of any recruitment and admission process should be educational. When the University contacts an adult learner, each opportunity should be viewed as a chance to educate the student. A more barrier-free admission process needs to be considered, one which is based on the assumption that the traditional measures of determining success in a university (high school record and standardized aptitude test scores) may not be applicable to the applicant with a significant number of years distance between high school graduation or prior attempts at collegiate study and entry or reentry to higher education.

Once a student has been admitted, what then keeps the student enrolled? What apparently takes prominence for adult learners is believing that the institution which they have chosen to attend and has admitted them has some special interest in their welfare and their higher education experience. This feeling of good will or "mattering," as it recently has been called, comes from the personal contacts made and the sense that the institution is responding to adult learners' needs, be they academic or personal. Beyond the immediacy of this personal satisfaction with the environment, adult learners

are concerned with location (the closer to home the better), the relevancy of program offering to students' goals, the time when courses are offered, the cost of attending school, the availability of child care, and the quality of the curriculum.

The response of Penn State to these concerns suggests some reconceptualizations of the current delivery system of programs and courses. The ability to earn a baccalaureate degree at sites other than Erie, Harrisburg, and University Park has been enhanced by the development of the extended degree. The task force supports offering the extended baccalaureate degree, but sees the need for much more to be done in this area. In fact, extended and resident baccalaureate programs should be available at many more locations throughout the Commonwealth. These programs should be accessible not only to Penn State students who may find themselves location-bound, but to students who have earned, for example, associate degrees at local community colleges and would look to Penn State for a quality baccalaureate degree.

While the task force focused primarily on adult learners as undergraduates, it should be acknowledged that graduate students are adult learners and express many of the same concerns and needs as their undergraduate counterparts. For example, a graduate student could have the same child-care needs as an undergraduate. It would be erroneous to assume though that a graduate student is any more adept at locating and securing appropriate child-care services than an undergraduate adult student. For either category of student the tribulations of dealing with the child-care scene have already been demonstrated and the critical needs identified. However, a comprehensive study of the particular needs and concerns of graduate students at Penn State is long overdue.

Adult learners, whether undergraduate or graduate, are particularly concerned about when courses are offered and look to institutions that provide courses in a variety of time configurations. This may mean more classes in the evening, during their children's school day, or a variation of the 15 week semester course. Since Penn State's fall semester begins before Labor Day, adult learners with school-age children find themselves scrambling for temporary day care until the elementary and secondary schools open. Those institutions which provide a calendar more in synchrony with the public school schedules are meeting a very immediate need. On a local level, Penn State campuses, especially via Continuing Education, have demonstrated a penchant for creative scheduling to respond to the adult market. The issue is basically one of continuing schedule variability on an ad hoc basis or institutionalizing a University-wide response to the particular constraints of many adult learners.

Obviously costs of higher education continue to be a factor as adult learners contemplate returning to higher education. How to provide a competitive tuition structure for adult students may be one of the greatest challenges for Penn State to face in regard to this population. Accepting the notion that a quality education does involve costs, it is hard to ascertain exactly where costs supersede quality as a priority for adult learners. Surely the fact that Penn State courses and degrees represent quality education draws adult learners to this University. Yet, we should not be so complacent to assume that quality is enough of a drawing card. In fact, surveys of adult learners indicate that this is not so (Aslanian & Brickell, 1988). Creative tuition packages for adult learners need to be considered: for example, tuition-free noncredit workshops for adult learners contemplating

a return to higher education or tuition waivers/discounts on preparatory courses which help ease the student's transition back to school. In addition, flexible tuition payment plans, use of credit cards, and monthly rather than semester payment schedules for residence halls are approaches to meeting the needs of adult learners. Enlarging sources of financial aid for adult learners is also critical.

Likewise, the issue of whether or how to grant credits for "life experiences" continues to confront those who deal with adults returning to higher education. Certainly a reexamination of Penn State's minimalist stance on this topic is in order as other institutions of higher education respond more directly to the granting of academic credits for "life experiences."

Since time is of the essence for many adult learners, the speed at which an institution such as Penn State can respond to initial inquiries is critical. Essential for the adult learner, many of whom have attended other institutions of higher education, is what credits will Penn State accept on transfer. The fact that Penn State has campuses in many locations, close to the homes of Commonwealth citizens, seems to favor a decentralized approach to this issue. However, for reasons of consistency and fiscal constraints, the determination of transfer credits is currently a centralized process in a market environment which demands a quicker response to this essential need.

Returning to higher education after an extended period of time can no longer be described as a trend; rather it is now the norm across the country. Yet, Penn State's protocol for admission to degree status often places the adult learner in the provisional or nondegree category. While being in either one of these categories may not necessarily jeopardize the educational experience of the adult learner, it certainly gives the impression that a

one of these categories may not necessarily jeopardize the educational experience of the adult learner, it certainly gives the impression that a marginal high school record and/or the absence of standardized aptitude test scores can relegate one to a lesser Penn State student status. In essence, the message is one of doubt on the part of the institution. Yet these students face the same educational expectations as students with degree status. Nevertheless, they are disadvantaged in regard to course priorities and subjected to a more rigorous academic standard for maintaining continuous enrollment (see Policies and Rules for Students, Senate Policy 10-00). When traditional standards of achievement are applied, nontraditional students come up lacking. Such a message to those who often hesitantly return to higher education is hardly an encouraging one. The institution which can provide the most promising opportunities to this population is surely the one which will be most successful in its recruitment.

The banner on a brochure from the Worthington Scranton Campus proclaims in bold "Penn State Welcomes the Adult Learner." For this statement to be more than rhetoric for the entire institution, the needs of this population have to be served adequately. Full-time designated professionals trained as counselors and advisers should be hired, and faculty who are sensitive to the learning styles of adults must be the norm rather than the exception. To ensure that all aspects of the University can respond adequately to the adult learner on campus, a permanent council for the adult learner must be established. This council would monitor the University's progress on integrating the adult into the academic community and would recommend both policies and procedures to be adopted by the University which would foster the educational experience of this population.

Implementing the recommendations in this report suggests additional costs to the University, both in its refocusing efforts and the potential need to hire extra personnel. However, we should not overlook what is lost by not paying adequate attention to this group of students. The adult learner brings to the classroom a different perspective, one which can enhance the educational process both for instructors and the traditional student. And the return of the adult learner to the labor force can keep a society infused with mature and educated workers.

When other institutions are more aggressively recruiting the adult learner, Penn State's unresponsiveness leads to another institution's gain. The resources, both fiscal and human, which Penn State can gain by recruiting and retaining the adult learner will be more than sufficient to cover the costs of this new advocacy.

Recommendations

Many units of the University provide programs and services for the adult learner. After an analysis of recommendations from previous studies and the Adult Services Check List (see Appendix B), it is evident that progress has been made. The recommendations listed below represent critical areas which still need to be addressed.

ESTABLISHING AN ON-GOING SYSTEM

1. The current demographic revolution necessitates an institutional response which transforms the Penn State approach to students from one which generally assumes that most students are alike to one which accommodates, accepts, and embraces the diversity that adult learners bring to campus. Consequently each senior officer of the University needs to be charged by the President to alter policy and practices as they pertain to the adult learner to accommodate the "fundamental transformation taking place in undergraduate education."

   Responsibility: President

2. The President of the University should appoint a permanent Council for the Adult Learner which would monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the Task Force on Adult Student Life and Learning, would propose new policies, programs and standards, and would review the progress of all areas of the University responding to the presence of adult learners.

   Responsibility: President

3. Penn State should commit funds for the following purposes:

   a. Full-time adult counselors at each Penn State location;

   b. Training programs to educate administrators, faculty, and staff concerning the particular needs of adult learners;

   c. Publications (internal and external) directly related to adult learners;

   d. Scholarships and fellowships to recruit and retain adult learners and to recognize the academic skills, perseverance, and particular needs of these students;

   e. Campaigns for the recruitment of adult learners;

   f. Co-curricular activities for adult learners;

   g. Financial incentives for experimental programs, program expansion, and enrichment courses and programs for adult learners;

   h. Expansion of the Returning Adult Student Center's role to include training of adult counselors, program oversight, increased data collection and dissemination, and the publication of a system-wide Newsletter; permanent funds should be established to fulfill this function.

   Responsibility: Senior Administration Officers
   General and Staff Officers
   Academic Deans and Provosts
   Commonwealth Campus Administrators

4. A formal network of adult counselors should be established to meet periodically under the auspices of the Returning Adult Student Center.

   Responsibility: Senior Vice President and Dean of the Commonwealth Educational System
   Vice President for Student Services

5. Data systems should be updated to include variables which can identify the adult learner (e.g., veteran status, financial independence, hiatus from education).

   Responsibility: Vice President and Vice Provost
   Executive Director, Computer and Information Systems

6. Descriptive information about Penn State adult learners, specifically undergraduate and graduate, and adult learners in general should be made available to the entire University community.

   Responsibility: Senior Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School
   Senior Vice President and Dean of the Commonwealth Educational System
   Vice President for Continuing Education
   Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education
   Vice President for Student Services

7. All units of Penn State should ensure that their printed materials are responsive to the adult learner.

   Responsibility: Senior Vice President for Development and University Relations

8. All Penn State campuses should institute immediately on-going orientation programs for the adult learner.

   Responsibility: Campus Executive Officers
   Academic Deans and Provosts
   Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education

FACULTY SENSITIZATION, INSTRUCTION, AND ACADEMIC POLICY

1. Penn State should provide a variety of faculty development opportunities to increase the sensitivity of both full-time and part-time faculty to issues related to the teaching and advising of adult learners.

   Responsibility: Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education

2. Administrative practices, compensation provisions, and promotion and tenure guidelines should encourage full-time faculty to deliver courses to adult learners in evening and weekend time periods, at off-campus locations, and using alternative modes of delivery (independent learning, compressed video, satellite, and teleconferencing). A variety of work schedules should be negotiated so that faculty teaching evening or weekend courses as part of load have reasonable time away from teaching and committee assignments during traditional teaching/office hours.

   Responsibility: Faculty Senate
   Academic Deans and Provosts

3. Additional provisions for awarding credit for academic competencies acquired outside the classroom should be provided by:

   a. Expanding the number of courses acceptable via CLEP examinations;

   Responsibility: Provost
   Faculty Senate

b. Reviewing the credit-by-exam policy to permit students in provisional and nondegree status to take departmental exams and earn credits before being granted degree status;

Responsibility: Faculty Senate

c. Granting credits for "life experiences."

Responsibility: Faculty Senate

4. Examine Senate Policy 83-30 Limitations on Source and Time for Credit Acquisition for possible revision so as not to be perceived as an obstacle for adult learners.

Responsibility: Faculty Senate

5. Reexamine admission criteria and practices as they relate to adult learners.

Responsibility: Faculty Senate

6. Review Senate Policy 57-00 Readmission with Academic Renewal to consider extension of applicable elements of the policy to course credits earned outside of Penn State.

Responsibility: Faculty Senate

7. Expand the opportunities for location-bound adult learners to earn Penn State degrees (associate, baccalaureate, graduate) via such approaches as extended degrees and more baccalaureate programs at CES sites.

Responsibility: Academic Deans and Provosts

ENHANCING CAMPUS/STUDENT LIFE

1. The Task Force on Adult Student Life and Learning endorses the recommendations in the Report of the University Child Care Task Force (June 1989) and urges that the child-care needs of adult learners (including part-time and evening students) at each campus and college location of Penn State be met, recognizing that there are campuses and/or colleges which might even move ahead of the Child Care Task Force's Action Plan schedule.

   Responsibility: University Child-Care Policy Executive Committee

2. Penn State should provide adult learners with housing and/or assistance with their housing search to include:

   a. A listing of affordable rental housing alternatives for adults including those with families;

   b. Establishing adult learner areas in the residence halls;

   c. Allowing undergraduate families to live in Grad Circle/Eastview Terrace and/or building more family housing as appropriate by location.

   Responsibility: Vice President for Student Services
   Senior Vice President for Finance and Operations and Treasurer

3. To create environments on all Penn State campuses which are supportive and affirming of the presence of adult learners, the Task Force recommends:

   a. providing adequate personal and career counseling;

b. ensuring appropriate health services;

c. providing a flexible schedule of service hours for libraries, computer labs, parking offices, student aid, admissions, food service, recreation, registration, and other support services (e.g., more evening and/or weekend hours);

d. creating adult-only lounges, orientation programs, and support groups;

e. making financial aid more available;

f. sponsoring adult student organizations and co-curricular activities attractive to adults and their families;

g. improving campus lighting and safety;

h. providing for the curricular needs of adult learners with specialized orientation courses, taught at appropriate times;

i. providing funds for specialized noncredit courses, credit courses for remediation, and tutoring which facilitate the transition of the adult learner into higher education.

Responsibility: Vice President for Student Services
Academic Deans and Provosts
Senior Vice President for Finance and Operations and Treasurer
Senior Vice President

ADVISING, COUNSELING, AND INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT

1. Full-time Adult Counselor positions should be established at all Penn State locations.

   Responsibility: Vice President for Student Services
   Senior Vice President and Dean of Commonwealth Educational System
   Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education

2. The role of all Adult Counselors should include formal academic advising responsibilities.

   Responsibility: Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education

3. Adult Counselors should be fully integrated into the Academic Advising and Information Centers and Counseling/Advising teams of the CES and Penn State Erie.

   Responsibility: Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education
   Senior Vice President and Dean of Commonwealth Educational System

4. Adult Counselors should provide additional career counseling in cooperation with Career Development and Placement Services staff at each location.

   Responsibility: Vice President for Student Services
   Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education

5. Adult learners should be informed about the services and resources available to them via a program of information dissemination which is directed at their specific needs.

Responsibility: Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education
Vice President for Student Services
Senior Vice President and Dean of Commonwealth Educational System

ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL SYSTEMS

Student Aid

1. Financial aid counseling services for adult learners should be expanded.

   Responsibility: Vice President and Vice Provost
   Senior Vice President and Dean of Commonwealth Educational System

2. A proportion of funds should be earmarked for first-time late-admitted adult learners.

   Responsibility: Vice President and Vice Provost

3. The Office of the Bursar should review the possibility of conducting its business in alternate ways, such as extending hours and providing more flexible payment plans.

   Responsibility: Senior Vice President for Finance and Operations and Treasurer

4. A formal proposal, budget recommendations, and administrative procedures for the establishment and/or operation of a Parent/Adult Learner Scholarship Fund should be prepared.

   Responsibility: Senior Vice President for Development and University Relations
   Vice President and Vice Provost

5. As new student aid funds are created, attention should be given to reviewing policies and procedures to ensure funds are available to all students, including adults.

   Responsibility: Senior Vice President for Development and University Relations
   Vice President and Vice Provost

6. Support of student aid funding legislation for part-time and adult students should be continued.

   Responsibility: Special Assistant to the President for Governmental Affairs
   Vice President and Vice Provost

7. The use of credit cards for the payment of all tuition fees should be implemented.

   Responsibility: Senior Vice President for Finance and Operations and Treasurer

8. Staff from all Penn State locations and the Returning Adult Student Center should forward to the Campus Student Aid Advisory Committee any policies and procedures needed to review which affect the adult learner.

   Responsibility: Senior Vice President and Dean of Commonwealth Educational System
   Vice President for Student Services

9. Exploration of alternate financial aid opportunities for part-time and adult students should be continued.

   Responsibility: Senior Vice President for Development and University Relations
   Vice President and Vice Provost

Admissions

1. The admissions process should be transformed to recognize the significance of the adult learner in higher education. This can be achieved in part with implementation of the following:
   a. A comprehensive system-wide recruitment plan for adult learners should be developed and implemented;
   b. An admission application specifically for the undergraduate adult learner should be developed;
   c. The decentralization of the "transfer credit" process so that non-University Park personnel can respond more rapidly to the inquiries of adult learners should be considered;
   d. "Transfer credits" should be granted at the point of admission rather than at the time of earning degree status;
   e. The readmission process for any student who is not in academic or financial difficulty with the University should be automated;
   f. The practice of allowing students whose admission paper work clears late in the semester to be converted to degree status for that semester should be continued.

   Responsibility: Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education
   Faculty Senate

Registration

1. The use of multiple scheduling patterns and priority assignments to make courses more accessible to adult learners should be expanded.

   Responsibility: Vice President and Vice Provost

2. The development of a microcomputer-based registration to facilitate on-site registrations for adult learners should be implemented.

Responsibility: Senior Vice President and Dean of Commonwealth Educational System
Vice President and Vice Provost

Financial Systems

1. The possibility of differential tuitions for evening and contract credit courses should be examined.

   Responsibility: Senior Vice President for Finance and Operations and Treasurer
   Senior Vice President and Dean of Commonwealth Educational System

2. Tuition and other financial reimbursements should be handled in a timely fashion.

   Responsibility: Senior Vice President for Finance and Operations and Treasurer

3. Correspondence to extended degree students when they "stop out" a semester regarding the general deposit refund should be edited so that this refund is not interpreted as a message from the University that the student is not expected to return.

   Responsibility: Senior Vice President for Finance and Operations and Treasurer

Table 1

Distribution of Undergraduate Enrollment by Age and Status

Age and Status	1972	1982	1992 (est.)
24 and under	69%	61%	51%
25 and over	31	39	49
Full-time	66	58	52
Part-time	34	42	48

Source: U.S. Department of Education, 1985.

From Schlossberg, Nancy; Lynch, Ann Q.; & Chickering, Arthur W., Improving Higher Education Environments for Adults, Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, 1989, p. 212.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Task Force on Adult Student Life and Learning acknowledges the support of the Office of Planning and Analysis during its deliberations and especially the efforts of Carol Everett. The work of the task force also benefitted from the presentations of Lorene Ashby, Diane Leos, Peg O'Hara, James Ryan, and Gale Siegel, five individuals who eloquently advocated for the adult learner at Penn State.

The Office of the President via the Provost and the University Faculty Senate through its chairperson not only provided us with our charge but demonstrated to the task force that the very highest office of the University understood the need to address the issues of the adult learner at Penn State. It is the continued support from these segments of the University which will enable the recommendations of this task force to be implemented fully.

Appendix A

References

Arbuckle, Robert. "Policy Statements Suggested by Adult Assessment Project Responses," Adult Learner Assessment Report. Commonwealth Educational System, Penn State University, University Park, PA 16802, September 1988.

Aslanian, C. and Brickell, H. How Americans in Transition Study for College Credit. College Entrance Examination Board, New York, 1988.

Copland, Barbara. Returning Adult Student Center: Annual Report. Returning Adult Student Center, Penn State University, University Park, PA 16802, 1987.

Faculty Senate Committee on Student Life. Adult Students. Penn State Faculty Senate, Penn State University, University Park, PA 16802, January 1989.

Hexter, H. & Andersen, C. J. Admission and Credit Policies for Adult Learners. Washington, D.C., American Council on Education, 1986.

Keeton, M. Learning from Experience: A Requirement for Technological Change. Learning from Experience Trust, London, England, 1987.

Keeton, M. (Ed.). Defining and Assuring Quality in Experiential Learning. New Directions for Experiential Learning, No. 9. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1980.

Mark, M. & Dewees, P. Recruitment, Retention and Alumni Development of Adult Learners Through Assessment of Prior Learning. Lifelong Learning, 8 (1) 18-20, 1984.

Polson, C., et al. Advising Adult Learners, NACADA Task Force Report. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 277 902), 1986.

Pew Higher Education Research Program. Policy Perspectives. The Pew Charitable Trusts, University of Pennsylvania, 1989.

Schlossberg, Nancy; Lynch, Ann Q.; & Chickering, Arthur W., Improving Higher Education Environments for Adults, Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, 1989.

Shuman, Susan. Characteristics and Attitudes of Adult Students in the Commonwealth Educational System, 1986-1987. Division of Planning Studies, Commonwealth Educational System, Penn State University, University Park, PA 16802, July 1987.

Shuman, Susan. Survey of Adult Student Services, Commonwealth Campuses. Division of Planning Studies, Commonwealth Educational System, Penn State University, University Park, PA 16802, August 1987.

Strategic Study Group on Continuing Education. "Final Report." Office of Planning and Analysis, Penn State University, University Park, PA 16802, February 1989.

Strategic Study Group on the Status of Women. "Returning Adult Students," Section N of Recommendation Package #4, Report to the President and the Commission for Women. Office of Planning and Analysis, Penn State University, University Park, PA 16802, December 1987.

University Child Care Task Force. The Children of Penn State: The University's Role in Child Care in the 1990's. Office of Planning and Analysis, Penn State University, University Park, PA 16802, June 1989.

Upcraft, Lee; Copland, Barbara; & Silian, Karen. Survey of Returning Adult Students at University Park. Division of Counseling Services and Program Assessment, Student Services, Penn State University, University Park, PA 16802, Spring 1988.

Varcoe, Kenneth and Committee. "Admissions Procedures for Adult Students." Commonwealth Educational System, Penn State University, University Park, PA 16802, 1987.

APPENDIX B

Adult Services Check List

This check list was designed to enable the Task Force on Adult Student Life and Learning to obtain essential information about the nature of the campus programs and services designed to serve adult learners.

Please circle, fill in the blank, or check off as appropriate.

CAMPUS: _____ SUBMITTED BY: _____

Yes	No		
Y	N	1.	Any special approaches to outreach and recruiting designed for this population Organized or conducted by what office _____
Y	N	2.	A targeted adult recruitment publication
Y	N	3.	Special orientation programs ___ part-time students ___ full-time students ___ day ___ evening ___ family members included
Y	N	4.	Special Freshman Testing, Counseling, and Advising Program for Adults
Y	N	5.	A designated adult services office or person
Y	N	6.	Specialist to counsel and advise adults . . . Who does the primary counseling and advising of adults? _____
Y	N	7.	Availability of specialized counseling (personal) and mental health services
Y	N	8.	Special adult issue need-based programs and opportunities for adults
Y	N	9.	An adult peer counseling or help group approach
Y	N	10.	An adult handbook or reference guide is available
Y	N	11.	An adult student organization Name of organization: _____
Y	N	12.	Access to student activities funds for adult needs
Y	N	13.	An adult lounge or special space primarily for adults

Y N 14. Adult newsletter or other communications approach

15. Adult students have expressed problems or concerns about:

Y N A. availability of faculty other than at class times

Y N B. faculty awareness of adult learning styles

Y N C. treatment of older students by traditional-age students

Y N 16. In the past year, faculty development programs or workshops have been offered on adult student needs, learning styles, etc.

Y N 17. Information about adult needs is obtained on a regular basis
How is this accomplished? _____

Y N 18. Adults who don't re-enroll are contacted to find out about their plans and are encouraged to return

19. Location bound issues are being addressed through:

Y N A. the development of extended programs

Y N B. articulation efforts with local institutions

Comments? _____
_____

Y N 20. Special or unique student aid funds for adults
Please identify _____

Y N 21. Payment of fees can be made by credit card

Y N 22. Special arrangements for scheduling of classes such as priority or time preferences accommodated? If yes, describe _____
_____

23. Alternative registration procedures:

Y N A. mail
B. telephone
C. other
Specify _____

Y N 24. Child-care resources -- If yes, check type(s) below:

___ information/referral

___ co-op

___ direct service

___ purchased services from community agency

___ other

Specify _____

Y N 25. Financial support for child-care needs
Please describe: _____

_____

26. Access to various services and facilities have been extended to evening/weekends: (Please describe)

Y N A. library _____

Y N B. learning center _____

Y N C. computer center(s) _____

Y N D. food services _____

Y N E. bookstore _____

Y N F. other: _____

Y N 27. Health services address unique needs of adults

Y N 28. Assistance in obtaining housing is available (specifically for adults)

Y N 29. Adult-oriented career planning programming and services exist

Y N 30. Academic assistance including learning skills and tutorial assistance is available

Y N 31. Adequacy of outdoor lighting (parking areas and walk-ways)

Please identify the areas where services to adults need improvement. Please list in priority order below.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Please return this survey to Eric White, 118 Grange Building, University Park, PA 16802 by Wednesday, April 18, 1990.

DATE: April 9, 1990

FROM: Eric R. White

TO: Campus Executive Officers

As chair of the Task Force on Adult Student Life and Learning which was recently charged by Provost Richardson and chair of the Faculty Senate Janet Atwood to develop a series of recommendations for the enhancement of campus/student life of adult students, I would appreciate your support in the completion of the attached check list.

This check list was developed by members of the task force in an effort to obtain information concerning the existence of programs and services available to adult students within the Commonwealth Educational System. The purpose of this check list is not for assessment, but rather to determine the range of programs and services provided and the extent to which they are offered throughout the CES.

It is possible that no one individual on your campus will be able to answer all of the questions; consequently, we are asking that this check list be shared with all those on your campus who might be able to respond to any particular question.

I would appreciate it if the check list would be returned to Eric R. White, Penn State University, 118 Grange Building, University Park, PA 16802, no later than April 18, 1990.

Thank you for your support in this most important endeavor.

Summary of Adult Services Check List Responses

The Adult Services Check List was designed to obtain essential information about programs and services for adult students at CES campuses, Erie, Harrisburg, and Great Valley. The questions parallel those asked three or four years ago on the ACE adult climate instrument. All locations sent the Adult Services Check List responded.

Two caveats are necessary in interpreting the data. First, the data reflect the views of the person(s) completing the instrument. Originally the check list was sent to 18 CEOs and 2 Provost/Deans; it was completed, however, by CEOs, DAAs, DSPSs, and combinations thereof. Second, the committee interpreting the data took liberty in reaggregating the data and generalizing from it.

Item 1 asked if the campus had any special approaches to outreach and recruiting for the adult population. Seventeen locations responded affirmatively, with twelve indicating that the efforts were conducted by the CE or Admissions offices. The committee recommends that these two units cooperate and/or share in the outreach task.

Items 2, 10, and 14 refer to publications. At least half of the locations had special recruitment pieces, handbooks, and/or newsletters for the adult population. The committee recommends that those locations without special publications for adults either take care to be inclusive of their diverse student body in their current publications or develop adult learner focused publications. It further recommends the publication of a system-

wide recruitment piece for adults and a system-wide newsletter to share information among locations.

Items 3, 8, and 29 asked about special orientation and other adult need-based programs. Most locations had special orientation programs for full-time, part-time, day, and evening students. Fewer had other need-based programs. The committee recommends that a one-day conference be held at which locations can share the components of their orientation and other adult-focused programs, including career seminars.

With regard to special FTCAP's for adults (item 4), fewer than half of Penn State's locations had them. Because of the difficulties of scheduling and the varying numbers of adults at each location, the committee has no recommendation.

Items 5, 6, and 7 are interrelated. Over half of the locations have a designated adult services office or person; eighteen have specialists to advise/counsel adults. The committee recommends that all locations have these special services, particularly a designated person or office for adults in addition to the CE office.

Adult peer counseling (item 9) or help groups appear at only 1/3 of the locations. The committee recommends that Altoona's peer counseling program be used as a model for other locations.

Three-fourths of the locations have adult student organizations (item 11), either social or academic in purpose. The committee recommends that all locations with at least 10% adults have one of these organizations.

Most locations provide access to SGA funds for adult student needs (item 12); however, the committee recommends that SGA funding patterns for adults be analyzed and that campus/college funds be used to supplement them.

Only 5 locations have adult lounges (item 13). The committee recommends that locations without a critical mass of adults (1/3 of total enrollment or more) provide a special meeting place for adults.

Items 15 and 16 are related in that problems and concerns expressed by adult students could be partly addressed through faculty development programs. The committee recommends that this be done centrally under the leadership of the Instructional Development Program and the Faculty Senate.

Many locations regularly collect information about adult needs (item 17) and do so by a variety of means: conducting surveys, meeting with adult organizations and advisory committees, and reading University publications. The committee recommends a system-wide survey every three years to monitor progress toward the goals.

Fewer than half of the locations follow-up on adult students who do not re-enroll (item 18). The committee recommends that the contact person for adult students at each location prepare a survey and cover letter to be sent to adults not enrolling or re-enrolling.

Location-bound issues (item 19), particularly offering extended programs, are being addressed by most campuses/colleges. However, articulation efforts with local institutions are not being done at almost half of the campuses/colleges. The committee recommends the inclusion of

more extended degree programs at locations and the development of more articulation programs.

Financial issues were tapped by items 20, 21, and 25. About half of the locations had special aid funds for adults and most allowed payment by credit card particularly for CE courses. The committee recommends that scholarship funds for adults be provided centrally, Resident Instruction change its policy regarding the acceptance of credit cards, and an analysis of the student aid distribution to adults be conducted.

Registration issues were tapped by items 22 and 23. Half of the locations had special arrangements including priority scheduling for adults and EGNAS students, evening registration, plus mail (16) and telephone (10) registration. The committee recommends that telephone and mail registration be extended to all locations for both RI and CE courses.

As for providing child-care resources, items 24 and 25 revealed that the most likely activity was providing information about local child-care providers and making referrals with 11 locations offering this service. Financial support of child-care services is still low. The committee endorses the final recommendations of the University Child Care Task Force to meet students' child-care needs.

Items 26 and 30, dealing with evening and weekend access to services and facilities including academic assistance, reveal high access to the library, computer center, and bookstore with less access to learning centers, recreational facilities, and food services. The committee recommends that each location assess its students' need for access with the

goal of making student and academic services accessible during day and evening (perhaps on a limited basis only) hours at each location.

Fewer than half of the locations offered special health services (item 27) for adult students. The committee recommends that campus/college health professionals determine services in place or needed by adults and share that information.

Only a quarter of the locations offers assistance in obtaining housing specifically for adults (item 28). Since shelter is such a basic need, the subcommittee recommends that existing housing lists be revised to address adults' housing needs.

In the area of outdoor lighting and safety (item 31), 95% of the locations found lighting adequate. The subcommittee recommends no further action on this item.

Finally, the Adult Student Check List asked for a priority list of needed improvements in the area of adult services. The areas most frequently mentioned were:

1) child care;
2) obtaining more financial aid for part-time students;
3) providing more learning assistance, tutoring, academic support, and developmental year-type offerings for adults;
4) providing an adult lounge or meeting space;
5) adult career services;
6) improving admissions and registration procedures and

increasing their flexibility;

7) increasing external degree offerings;

8) offering comparable student and academic services both day and evening; and,

9) improving communications with adults.

The committee suggests that these priority items be merged with existing recommendations where appropriate.

Submitted by: Barbara A. Copland
Charlene H. Harrison, chair
Larry R. Pollock
June P. Roarabaugh
John R. Saunders
Kenneth E. Varcoe

APPENDIX C

Selected Comments on Implementation

Faculty Sensitization, Instruction and Academic Policy

Faculty Development. A number of campuses already report opportunities for faculty development. Informal opportunities for faculty to be sensitized to adult learner needs exist through the Adult Club "Lunch Bunch" (Altoona); encouragement of experienced faculty to share ideas in this area (DuBois); and department heads working with individual faculty (Harrisburg). Administrators at many locations expressed a strong interest in the availability of more formal opportunities. The faculty development opportunities that have already been offered include:

1) Fall convocation speech (Wilkes-Barre);
2) Participation in satellite program on teaching adults (Wilkes-Barre);
3) Books and manuals on teaching adults (Beaver, Worthington Scranton, York);
4) Seminars on learning styles and learning strategies;
5) Speakers - John Gardner, Larry Pollock (New Kensington), Robert Bernoff (Ogontz);
6) Campus Workshops - (Berks, Schuylkill, York); workshops delivered by Maryellen Weimer of the Instructional Development Program (Ogontz, Worthington Scranton);
7) Regional Workshops - including panels of campus faculty and adult students - planned by Gerontology Center (Dan Lago) and Adult

Education Program (Jovita Ross-Gordon) - New Kensington, Berks; and,

8) Participation in consortium with other nearby colleges (New Kensington).

Faculty attitudes toward adult learners range from enthusiastic to wary. Similarly, preparedness to teach in a way that it consistent with adult learning needs and styles varies greatly. Faculty development workshops have in the past been instrumental in assisting faculty groups at institutions around the country to better serve this population.

Faculty. There is variability across locations in the involvement and incentives for the involvement of full-time and part-time faculty with adult learners in day courses, evening courses, off-campus or extended degree programs, and alternative delivery. One of the frequently mentioned incentives was the natural motivation instructors have to continue working with these highly motivated students.

The image of adult learners as part-time students enrolled in the evening taught by part-time faculty is no longer accurate at Penn State. Several locations reported increasing attendance of traditional-age students in evening courses as one dimension in this change. More significantly, adults attend courses and programs offered at all times of day; the time of day of the class and patterns within particular academic programs often influence whether adults are likely to be exposed to full-time faculty (Shenango, Harrisburg, McKeesport). This pattern too is changing at many locations. At a number of locations including Harrisburg,

McKeesport, Wilkes-Barre, DuBois, and Ogontz, full-time faculty teach evening as well as day courses as part of their regular load. The opportunity to teach 300 and 400 level courses and the rewards flowing from teaching a highly motivated student population were said to be incentives at these and other locations. Provision of a newsletter and a guide to teaching adults, "Applied Andragogy," by Penn State's Gordon Godbey, were mentioned as incentives at York.

Regarding nontraditional approaches to course delivery: twenty-five percent of students enrolled in Beaver's extended nursing program take Independent Studies courses which are taught by full-time faculty. At the same campus over 95% of students enrolled in management development courses, many offered in-plant are taught by "special" full-time faculty who teach in a "non-traditional" way. Shenango also reported contract-credit programs taught at business or industrial sites. Ogontz also uses full-time faculty for delivery of an extended nursing program; extended baccalaureate degree programs in Mechanical Engineering and Electrical Engineering are offered by full-time faculty at New Kensington; the degree is extended from Harrisburg. Incentives for off-campus teaching range from the informal balancing of heavy semesters with light semesters (Harrisburg) to precise formulas for accumulating teaching credits for off-campus teaching (Delaware County, Wilkes-Barre).

Faculty receive extra compensation for development of Independent Learning courses as well as for grading the work of students enrolled in these courses.

Credit Acquisition. The University currently makes provisions for the earning of credit through CLEP exams (College-Level Examination Program; Senate Policy 42-94), Undergraduate Proficiency Examinations, and departmental Proficiency exams (Senate Policy 42-50), and certification of credits for educational experiences in the Armed Services (Senate Policy 42-98). Several limitations were revealed through discussions with CEO's and members of this committee, and the examination of written policies: 1) Credit by Examination is permitted only for degree candidates. Adults may in fact wish to get verification of credits that will be earned prior to being officially admitted to a degree program. 2) A limited number of courses are available through CLEP examinations. 3) Relatively few military training experiences actually translate into undergraduate credit based on standards for evaluation given in the American Council on Education publication, "A Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services." None of these options provides for any evaluation of equivalence of life and work experience to coursework.

With regard to using standardized tests for awarding credit for degrees, the College Board Advanced Placement Examinations, the College Board College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), and the Defense Activity Nontraditional Education Support (DANTES) Subject Standardized Tests (DSST) are now used as stated in Senate Policy 42-00 Acquisition of Credit. The use of other examinations for awarding credit would require a thorough study. A study of this type is not in progress at this time.

The issue of credit for "life experience" was one of the more controversial ones coming before this committee. Some view this as an inappropriate concession to consumer-minded adults (Chronicle of Higher Education, April 18, 1990). On the other hand, there are many supporters of the assessment of credit for "life experience" (Keeton, 1980; Mark & Dewees, 1984) and an association (Council for Adult and Experiential Learning) is devoted to the study of and promotion of assessment of prior learning for adults. Traditional modes of assessment have been through CEEB's CLEP program, ACT's Proficiency Examination Program (PEP) and the military's Program on Noncollegiate Sponsored Instruction (PONSI). Beyond this, more than one-third of institutions surveyed by the American Council on Education reported using some other process to assess evidence of prior life experience (Hexter & Andersen, 1986). In explaining this concept, Keeton says: "The idea here is basically that people learn a great deal outside of college and classroom that may nevertheless be of comparable difficulty, of comparable level, and in some cases even equivalent to classroom learning, and that deserves recognition, so that the individual need not repeat those studies, wasting time and money. Our initial interest in finding a way to assess and recognize appropriately what people had learned prior to matriculation in college or university, was a concern with fairness, with the cost in time-saving to the individuals, and with starting them at the appropriate places in the collegiate or university studies" (p. 9).

Senate Policy. Senate Policy 83-80 does state that baccalaureate degree candidates need to complete their last 60 credits within five calendar years, and associate degree candidates, the last 30 credits in three years. However, college deans can make exceptions for non-extended programs, and exceptions are automatic for extended degrees. Exceptions are made so routinely for anyone requesting an exception that it does not appear to be a problem for enrolled students. However, it may appear to be a problem to prospective adult learners if it is presented to them or perceived by them as an obstacle in obtaining a degree. Policy 83-80 could be revised to reflect this if needed, but it should not be presented to prospective students as an obstacle in obtaining a degree since it is so easy to overcome.

Admission Criteria for Adult Learners. Standardized test results are used (1) in making admissions decisions and (2) in awarding credit for degrees.

Admissions decisions for freshmen are based on a prediction of reasonable probability of success in the chosen program of study as stated in paragraph 4 of the Basic Admissions Policies (Policies and Rules for Students). Admissions decisions for other than freshman admission are based on an indication of a reasonable probability of success as measured by actual performance in degree courses taken at Penn State or at another college or university.

With regard to the prediction of academic success in freshman admission, two standardized tests are now used, namely, the SAT and the

ACT. In order to include other tests in predicting academic success for admission purposes, a thorough study would be necessary. A study of this type is not in progress at this time.

Provisional status currently provides a means of admission for students who either do not meet the usual admission criteria or are not able to supply all of the data normally evaluated for admission. For example, adult learners may wind up in provisional status because of poor academic performance in high school years ago or because the required standardized tests were not taken. Admission to provisional status in both cases assumes that the high school G.P.A. and standardized aptitude test scores are reliable predictors of a student's likelihood to succeed at Penn State. This is a questionable assumption.

A limited amount of research on this topic questions the validity of traditional admission criteria as indicators for predicting the performance of adult learners. A number of institutions permit adult learners to begin immediately with their studies through a special degree category. Typically, more current information is relied upon to predict college success when such programs are designed. Interviews or assessments of recent work and volunteer contributions may be used to supplement G.P.A. and test data. Successful performance in a specified number of courses often becomes the bottom line for prediction with this population.

Submitted by: Daniel Maier-Katkin

Judith Newman

Brian Tormey

Jovita Ross-Gordon, Chair

Enhancing Campus/Student Life

Child Care. During the 1988-89 academic year, a University Child Care Task Force was appointed. It conducted University-wide needs assessments for child care and reaffirmed the needs identified in earlier reports for resource and referral, community partnerships, and expanded campus child care. Following a period of invited comment from members of the University community, President Jordan appointed William Asbury, Grace Hampton, Carol Herrmann, and James Wagner to a University Child Care Policy Executive Committee. The decision was made to place the Director of Child Care Services in Human Resources. Subsequently, a Position Description was developed and advertised. The selection process has now reached the interview state. On April 19, 1990, faculty, staff, and student members of the twelve person University Child Care Advisory Committee were named.

At Hershey Medical Center a child-care center built and operated by Magic Years on land leased from the University was opened (September 1989).

The Adult Services Check List provided an update on campus child-care resources and financial support for child-care needs. For the 20 campus/college locations responding to the child-care resources question, 11 provide information/referral, 1 operates a co-op, 1 purchases services from

the community, and 6 do nothing (multiple responses were permitted). Responses to the "financial support for child-care needs" question indicate that 17 campuses/college locations do nothing, one each has a vendor voucher system based on need, an emergency day care fund, and reimbursement for approved/licensed day care centers.

Housing at University Park. The Returning Adult Student Environment (RASE) House has been established in Tener Hall. This coeducational, traditional residence hall setting serves single adult learners and those who are living apart from their families while they are enrolled here.

Recently, Donald Arndt, Housing and Food Services, convened persons with adult learner constituencies in an attempt to determine whether additional family housing including housing for undergraduate families was warranted. Preliminary analysis of the Returning Adult Student Center survey of undergraduate adult learners indicates a need for affordable housing.

Of the 20 Adult Services Check Lists received, 5 campus/college locations indicate that assistance in obtaining housing specifically for adults is available. The remainder do not provide such specialized community housing referral information, although they may have an off-campus housing list.

Administrative and Financial Systems

Either a scholarship or loan fund could be established which would need to be coordinated with existing student aid programs. The Returning Adult Student Center may need to work with the Development Office to

establish a procedure to raise funds for either of these programs. Adult learners are currently eligible for scholarships or University loans if they are taking at least 12 credits. For those taking less than 12 credits, federal student loans are available.

The use of credit cards are now permitted for students enrolled in Continuing Education courses.

The amount of federal funds has not been sufficient to fund all students with financial need. Returning adult students are eligible for the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, Perkins Loan (formerly the National Direct Student Loan), and the College Work-Study employment program. Also, Pell Grants are available. Pell Grants were available for less than half-time students for a short time during the 1989-90 academic year until federal budget constraints eliminated Pell Grants for less than half-time students.

Advising, Counseling, and Informational Support

Currently the majority of adult counselors are part-time and work in the evening. This part-time status is not fully conducive to providing complete and effective services for adult learners. The adult counselors could benefit from more extensive interaction with the University community where their expertise could be used and their knowledge base would be expanded.

The Returning Adult Student Center at University Park produces a publication called "A Guidebook for Nontraditional Students." A handbook or series of handbooks should be developed which provides the essential

information for all adult learners as they prepare for and engage in study at Penn State; space for campus specific material to be added to these handbooks should be provided.